United Nations A/62/PV.122

General Assembly

Sixty-second session

Official Records

122nd plenary meeting
Monday, 15 September 2008, 10 a.m.
New York

President: Mr. Kerim ..... (The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia)

The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Agenda item 121 (*continued*)

Revitalization of the work of the General Assembly

Report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly (A/62/952)

Draft resolution (A/62/952, para. 46)

The President: With regard to the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly, I would like to inform members that the annex to the report, in English only, is available in the General Assembly Hall and will be issued in all official languages at a later stage, as agreed.

We shall now proceed to consider the draft resolution contained in paragraph 46 of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group.

Before giving the floor to speakers wishing to speak in explanation of vote before the vote, I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

As I see no requests for the floor, the Assembly will now take a decision on the draft resolution entitled "Revitalization of the General Assembly", which is contained in paragraph 46 of the report of the Ad Hoc Working Group on the Revitalization of the General Assembly. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft resolution?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 62/276).

The President: I should like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Eladio Loizaga of Paraguay and Ambassador Andrzej Towpik of Poland, the two Co-Chairs of the Ad Hoc Working Group, who have so ably conducted the Group's discussions and complex negotiations. I am sure the members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 121?

It was so decided.

Agenda item 14

Prevention of armed conflict

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-second session.

It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer the consideration of this item to the sixty-third session. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer the consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of its sixty-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 14.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

08-50581 (E)

Agenda items 15 and 22 to 28

The situation in Central America: progress in fashioning a region of peace, freedom, democracy and development

Question of Cyprus

Armed aggression against the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Question of the Falkland Islands (Malvinas)

The situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti

Armed Israeli aggression against the Iraqi nuclear installations and its grave consequences for the established international system concerning the peaceful uses of nuclear energy, the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and international peace and security

Consequences of the Iraqi occupation of and aggression against Kuwait

Declaration of the Assembly of Heads of State and Government of the Organization of African Unity on the aerial and naval military attack against the Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya by the present United States Administration in April 1986

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the Assembly decided to include item 15 in the agenda of the sixty-second session, in accordance with its decision 60/508, of 31 October 2005. Members will further recall that, at the same plenary meeting of 21 September 2007, the Assembly decided to include items 22 to 28 in the agenda of the sixty-second session, in accordance with paragraph 4 (b) of the annex to its resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004. In resolution 58/316, of 1 July 2004, and decision 60/508, of 31 October 2005, the Assembly decided that those items shall remain on the agenda for consideration upon notification by a Member State. Accordingly, those items have been included in the draft agenda of the sixty-third session.

The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda items 15 and 22 to 28.

Agenda item 124

Follow-up to the recommendations on administrative and internal oversight of the Independent Inquiry Committee into the United Nations Oil-for-Food Programme

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the General Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-second session.

Mr. Urbina (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Costa Rica would like to request that we retain this item in the agenda of the General Assembly. The report of the Independent Inquiry Committee made a series of recommendations that we believe continue to be relevant. The Assembly may be able to take action on those recommendations in the future. Along those lines, we would like to repeat our request to retain this item on the agenda.

The President: May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of its sixty-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 124.

Agenda item 145

Financing of the United Nations Mission in East Timor

The President: Members will recall that, at its 3rd plenary meeting, on 21 September 2007, the Assembly decided to include this item in the agenda of the sixty-second session. It is my understanding that it would be desirable to defer consideration of this item to the sixty-third session of the General Assembly. May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to defer consideration of this item and to include it in the draft agenda of its sixty-third session?

It was so decided.

The President: The Assembly has thus concluded its consideration of agenda item 145.

Agenda item 116 (*continued*)

Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Draft resolutions (A/62/L.51 and A/62/L.52)

The President: We shall now proceed to consider draft resolutions A/62/L.51 and A/62/L.52. Before giving the floor to speakers in explanation of vote before the vote, may I remind speakers that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Amorós Núñez (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): With regard to the draft resolution that we are about to adopt, the delegation of Cuba, on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77, and specifically their Joint Coordinating Committee, would like to reiterate that the preference of the Group throughout the process of discussions on this issue has been to maintain the integrity of that process. We would also like to stress that we would prefer that, when a decision is taken, we adopt a single decision in the process. We know, of course, that mention is made in the draft resolution of voting on those issues, but we would like to reaffirm that it is of primary importance for the Committee that this issue be very clear.

With regard to the topic mentioned in the last preambular paragraph of the draft resolution, the Group would also like to stress its hope that a discussion will take place once the relevant assessment of the implementation of those programmes has been made. Only such an assessment will make it possible for an intergovernmental evaluation of the "Delivering as one" pilot programmes for a unified presence on the ground to be carried out.

We would also like to acknowledge the work carried out by the Co-Chairmen of the process, the representatives of Tanzania and Ireland, and their efforts in the consultation process.

But above all, we would like to stress the issues we just highlighted: the integrity of the process, the need for a single decision to be taken when the time comes to decide on this subject, and the importance of completing the assessment I mentioned previously so that a proper intergovernmental evaluation of the pilot programmes can be carried out.

The President: The Assembly will first take action on draft resolution A/62/L.51, entitled "System-wide coherence". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.51?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 62/277).

The President: The Assembly will now take action on draft resolution A/62/L.52, entitled "Mandate review". May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/62/L.52?

The draft resolution was adopted (resolution 62/278).

The President: I call on those representatives who wish to make statements of position on the resolutions just adopted.

Mr. Cumberbatch Miguén (Cuba) (*spoke in Spanish*): Before we conclude our consideration of this item on the agenda, I would like to record the position of Cuba on this subject in a general statement.

My delegation applauds the conclusion of a process that should never have begun, since, as we have stated more than once, it was flawed from the outset. As a matter of fact, the initial report of the Secretary-General on this matter was simply discarded as a basis for the consultations that began in early 2006. The format of the mandate review that is concluding today was the result of an attempt by a group of delegations to undermine the democratic nature of the United Nations, not of a genuine interest in reforming its structure so that the Organization can respond, at each historic point, to the problems that our societies face. The last stage of the negotiating process made that clear.

The initial rhetoric, at the conclusion of the 2005 World Summit, stressed the need to consider the way in which the intergovernmentally agreed guidelines were being implemented. However, it later became an obvious exercise to try and prevent Member States from presenting initiatives, according to their rights under the Charter of the United Nations and the rules of procedure of the intergovernmental organs of the system, while the self-granted prerogatives of the powerful would not be questioned under any circumstances.

The most worrisome aspect of this is that there are subsidiary bodies of the Assembly with a clear mandate to review the status of the implementation of intergovernmental decisions and their enforcement by

the Secretariat and to make recommendations in that regard to the States Members of the Organization.

Cuba is convinced that the United Nations, like any other institution, must constantly improve its functioning. But it will never accept that, in that guise, there should be attempts to silence the concerns of developing countries and to suppress the democratic nature of the decision-making process on the various items on the Organization's agenda. Our delegation will continue to closely watch for any future effort to distort the principles and purposes that guide the work of the United Nations.

Mr. Cooper (United States of America): Our delegation would like to make a statement and to offer extended remarks on agenda item 116 and resolution 62/278.

My delegation is very grateful for the diligent efforts and the 8 August 2008 report of the Co-Chairs for the informal plenary on mandate review. We supported the Co-Chairs' conclusion that, given the obstacles identified, it was not worthwhile to continue the mandate review process in which we engaged during the recent sessions of the General Assembly. However, in doing so, we must acknowledge our failure to accomplish the goal of the 2005 World Summit of substantively reviewing the 9,000 or so mandates of the Organization to weed out obsolete and redundant mandates.

It is inevitable that, over the years, an organization of this size will accumulate such mandates, and it is our fiduciary responsibility to identify and weed out such mandates. Unfortunately, we have been unable to fulfil those responsibilities in the manner our leaders anticipated. We welcome resolution 62/278, which notes the Co-Chairs' report's findings and recognizes the usefulness and need of the online mandate registry.

The United States welcomes paragraph 4 of resolution 62/278, which provides an opportunity for the General Assembly to consider alternative, more limited or even more forward-looking ways to review mandates. Such alternatives could include a review focused on the mandate-generation cycle. Member States will recall that the Secretary-General identified such a possible approach in his report launching the comprehensive review of mandates.

Having concluded that we cannot conduct the comprehensive review of mandates originally contemplated in the 2005 World Summit, the United States looks forward to taking up the opportunity to consider more limited and focused alternatives in the first resumed meeting of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly.

The President: Before proceeding further, I wish to inform members that negotiations on the report of the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform are still taking place.

I should like, therefore, to propose to the Assembly that it suspend this meeting until after the conclusion of the negotiations of the Working Group. The Assembly will take up the remaining items at the resumption of the meeting.

If there is no objection, may I take it that the Assembly agrees to suspend the meeting?

It was so decided.

The President: I would like now to inform members that following the suspension of this plenary meeting, the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform will convene in Conference Room 2 at 11 a.m.

The meeting was suspended at 10.25 a.m. and resumed at 7.10 p.m.

Agenda item 122 (*continued*)

Question of equitable representation on and increase in the membership of the Security Council and related matters

Report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council (A/62/47)

Draft decision (A/62/47, para. 23)

The President: Members will recall that the General Assembly held a joint debate on agenda items 9 and 122 at its 47th to 51st plenary meetings, on 12, 13 and 14 November 2007. In that connection, the Assembly has before it a draft decision contained in paragraph 23 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group. For the time being, the draft decision is contained in document A/AC.247/2008/L.1/Rev.2.

Bearing in mind the proceedings of the Open-ended Working Group, of which I am Chairman, I have

decided, as President of the General Assembly, to reassume ownership of the document submitted to members, which has been discussed and on which I would like there to be a consensus among the States members of the Assembly. In that regard, I shall read out the following amendments to paragraph 23, under part IV, entitled "Recommendations".

In subparagraph (c), the words "and negotiables", after the word "modalities", are deleted and replaced with the words "in order to prepare and facilitate" before the words "intergovernmental negotiations on the question of equitable representation and increase in the membership of the Security Council", followed by the following added sentence:

> "The Chairman of the Open-ended Working Group will present the results of these consultations to an informal plenary session of the General Assembly no later than 1 February 2009."

In the first sentence of subparagraph (d), after the words "also decides", the words "taking into consideration the results achieved so far in the Open-ended Working Group" are added. Later on in the same subparagraph, after the words "not later than", the words "March 2009" are replaced with the words "28 February 2009", as there will be no 29 February in 2009. At the end of the subparagraph, the words "by the membership" are replaced with the words "by Member States". In subparagraph (f), after the words "Open-ended Working Group", the words "to that end" are deleted.

Paragraph 22 will be revised to reflect the actual dates of the proceedings and will read as follows: "At its 13th meeting, on 15 September 2008, the Working Group considered and adopted the present report."

Paragraph 21 will also be revised to reflect the actual dates of the proceedings, as follows: after the words "At its 9th and 10th meetings, on 10 September 2008", the words "as well as its 11th meeting, on 12 September, and 12th meeting, on 15 September 2008" will be inserted before the words "the Working Group".

As I stated earlier, I call on Member States to adopt the draft decision by consensus.

We shall now proceed to consider the draft decision contained in paragraph 23 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group, as orally amended.

Before giving the floor to the representative of Costa Rica to speak in explanation of position before action is taken on the draft decision, may I remind delegations that explanations of position are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Ballestero (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation has taken the floor to thank you, Mr. President, the Working Group and all those directly involved for their efforts to reach this agreement. Costa Rica is prepared to follow your recommendation and to adopt the agreement by consensus. However, I should like to clarify three points.

First, my delegation understands that the Working Group reached an agreement that did not previously exist and that, as you clearly indicated in your initial comments, it did so under your chairmanship. As you have reassumed ownership of the draft decision and there is no opposition to it in principle, it is a recommendation that we, as a Working Group, are making to the Assembly.

Secondly, in the understanding that there is no opposition on the part of any member of the Open-ended Working Group, Costa Rica is prepared to accept the Group's recommendation so long as it is clearly established that there is a need for an agreement that will ensure the broadest possible political agreement, and that such an agreement will certainly be reached through negotiations.

Thirdly, my delegation regrets in particular the flexibility with which we dealt with the rules of procedure on this occasion. We are especially concerned at the precedent that we could be establishing with regard to non-voting in working groups, which could cause problems in the way all our working groups operate.

Finally, I wish to express once again my gratitude to you, Sir, and all those who participated for their efforts. I hope that, in the future, we can arrive at agreements without having to be so creative in applying the rules of procedure.

The President: The Assembly will now take action on the draft decision contained in paragraph 23 of the report of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council, as orally amended. May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt the draft decision, as orally amended?

The draft decision, as orally amended, was adopted.

The President: I shall now call on those representatives who wish to speak in explanation of position on the decision just adopted.

Mr. Takasu (Japan): The purpose of my intervention is to express, on behalf of many of my colleagues, our deepest appreciation to you, Mr. President, for the leadership that you have demonstrated throughout the sixty-second session of the General Assembly in facilitating the process of Security Council reform so as to move it forward.

Particularly in the last couple of weeks, your tireless efforts and extreme patience in listening to all kinds of positions have made it possible to adopt a very important decision by consensus. At the same time, I would like to pay tribute to the members of the task force — the Permanent Representatives of Bangladesh, Chile, Djibouti and Portugal — for their able assistance to you and your team.

All of us have joined the very important decision to launch intergovernmental negotiations on Security Council reform early next year. It is clear that all of us demonstrated extraordinary flexibility in coming to that consensus agreement to start intergovernmental negotiations comprising the positions of various countries. In my opinion, it will be an important or even historic decision to move the process of reform from consultation to real, meaningful negotiations.

In order to make it possible, all of us have made some compromise. There is no point in discussing who received more and who received less. All of us are winners because our realization of Security Council reform to reflect the political reality of the world is in the interests of all.

I would appeal to all delegations, despite all the give and take of the past couple of days, to implement the decision very deliberately and in good faith, and to engage actively and constructively in the forthcoming consideration of the matter in the Open-ended Working Group and in the intergovernmental negotiations in the plenary session.

Mr. President, your personal contribution in launching intergovernmental negotiations after so many years will be remembered in the annals of the United Nations.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): Mr. President, I rise to pay tribute to you and your facilitators for having guided us in the very difficult task of leading us to where we are. I also wish to pay tribute to the more than 60 delegations that were very quick and willing to sign up in support of your report.

I think today is a wonderful day for the United Nations because we have all come together in a commitment to go forward with intergovernmental negotiations in February 2009. We could not have arrived at this point without your help, Mr. President, and I am sure that as you finish your assignment, you can look back and watch on television and see that we will still be fighting like we are fighting now, but at least it will be for a common goal.

The President: I should now like to express my sincere thanks to Ambassador Ismat Jahan of Bangladesh, Ambassador Heraldo Muñoz of Chile, Ambassador João Manuel Guerra Salgueiro of Portugal and Ambassador Roble Olhaye of Djibouti, who conducted, on my behalf, the discussions and complex negotiations of the Open-ended Working Group on the Question of Equitable Representation on and Increase in the Membership of the Security Council and Other Matters related to the Security Council. I am sure that members of the Assembly join me in extending to them our sincere appreciation.

May I take it that it is the wish of the Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 122?

It was so decided.

Agenda items remaining for consideration during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly

The President: I should like to remind delegations that the following agenda items on which action has been taken at previous meetings have remained open for consideration during the sixty-second session of the General Assembly: items 10, 11, 16 to 18, 20, 43, 48, 53 (a), 54 (d), 57 (b), 86, 108 to 110, 113 (a) and (c), 115, 117, 123, 125 to 144, 146 to 156, 161 and 164.

As Members are aware, those items have been included in the provisional agenda of the sixty-third session of the General Assembly with the exception of agenda item 11, entitled "Elimination of unilateral extraterritorial coercive economic measures as a means of political and economic compulsion"; agenda item 117, entitled "United Nations reform: measures and proposals"; agenda item 127, entitled "Programme budget for the biennium 2006-2007"; and agenda item

146, entitled "Financing of the United Nations Mission of Support in East Timor".

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of those items at the present session?

It was so decided.

Statement by the President

The President: As we are approaching the end of the sixty-second session of the General Assembly, allow me to make a few remarks.

At the beginning of the sixty-second session, I asked members to consider the wise words of George Bernard Shaw when he said that he did not believe in circumstances: "The people who get on in this world are the people who get up and look for the circumstances they want, and, if they can't find them, make them" (*Mrs. Warren's Profession, Act II*).

In order to create the right circumstances, I laid out a framework of priorities for the session that all Member States could own and drive forward — including such issues as climate change, financing for development, the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), countering terrorism and renewing management and effectiveness in reforming the Organization. To allow the Assembly to deliver on those worthy goals, I encouraged an atmosphere in which we all had responsibilities to seek out and build compromises through open and transparent working practices and greater cooperation and by respecting the dignity of all Member States. To energize substantive discussions, I called on the Assembly to be more engaged, insightful and dialogue-oriented. As new priorities emerged, such as the food crisis, I challenged the Assembly to demonstrate the flexibility and leadership necessary to forge a global consensus for action.

Now, at the end of the session, can we say that we have created the circumstances for progress and a more vital, dynamic and influential Assembly that reaches out and delivers results in the interests of all? Have we silenced our critics by demonstrating that the United Nations is able to rise to the challenges of the twenty-first century and that it can empower individuals and communities to take charge of their own destinies? Are we moving in the right direction so that, together, we can chart the course that the Organization must take for a new culture of international relations to flourish?

The year 2008 has emphasized that a divided approach to international relations and the interdependent challenges we face is not in the interest of the global public we serve. It has been a year of controversies, conflict, climate change and crises, man-made and natural alike. Sovereignty and territorial integrity have come under threat. Although we have taken tentative steps to define our responsibility to protect and the nature of legitimate humanitarian interventions, the role of the United Nations remains unclear. There remains serious work to be done on those issues, and on human security, during the next session.

The financial system has been tested and found wanting. A global downturn could yet undermine the economic progress achieved over the past decade. Food and energy prices rose to record highs, putting fragile progress on the Millennium Development Goals under exorbitant pressure. The reform of the global financial architecture has been slow and overtaken by economic events. Rather than dealing with the five priorities and those emerging issues in an introspective way, I challenged the General Assembly to use its influence and voice to strengthen the capacity of the United Nations to respond.

On climate change it did so with vigour. We held three important debates to promote new partnerships and the role of the private sector and to highlight the special needs of the most vulnerable. The Assembly sent a strong political message that it was time for action. That provided the impulse necessary for success in Bali. The Assembly also provided the political backing necessary to create greater coherence in the United Nations system's response to climate change. Those were among our greatest achievements.

The sixty-second session of the General Assembly has had a strong focus on development. Throughout the gruelling preparatory process in the run-up to the Financing for Development Review Conference in Doha, which began with the high-level dialogue, Member States and the broader set of stakeholders worked collaboratively on detail and substance. The Assembly has set the stage for a new deal to emerge. We now need leaders willing to take the same bold decisions as were taken at Monterrey, not just by keeping their promises but also by rising to new challenges and the difficult economic outlook we all face. The stakes could not be higher. Financing for development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals on time will lift 500 million people

out of poverty, 300 million more people will be adequately fed and 30 million young children's lives will have been saved.

Yet, as we all agreed during one of the highlights of the session at the thematic debate on the MDGs midway between the adoption of the Goals and the 2015 deadline to achieve them, it is clear that the pace is too slow. We must now use the opportunities ahead — at the high-level event on 22 September on Africa's development needs and on 25 September on the Millennium Development Goals — to accelerate progress.

Halting climate change, boosting financing for development and achieving the Millennium Development Goals have been and should remain our top priorities. The nexus between those core issues is fundamental to realizing our goal of long-term economic and environmental sustainability. The concept of sustainable development is the mantra that should be embedded in our strategic approach to Doha, as should the reshaping of the international financial system's institutions so that they are fit for the twenty-first century.

A fairer and more equitable world with opportunity for all will also be a safer, more stable and secure world. That is why I would also like to commend Member States for adopting by consensus a resolution to review the implementation of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy. That was a huge achievement that sent a strong message that we stand united against that scourge. In addition, members participated in symposiums, strengthened the Task Force, shared best practices and worked closely with each other and the United Nations system to increase our collective capability to counter terrorism. That was just one aspect of our broader efforts to renew the management and effectiveness of the Organization.

As Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon acknowledged at the beginning of the session, the United Nations needs a change in the international climate. It needs "to faster, more flexible and more mobile" (*A/62/PV.4, p. 2*). To some extent, our discussions on system-wide coherence have realized that at the country level. We must now do more at Headquarters, in particular on the issues of governance, funding and gender. The resolution adopted today set the way forward to make further substantive progress during the sixty-third session.

We made important progress on management reform. Building on the four nations' initiative, we used the thematic debate to raise its profile. More important, it enabled, for the first time, an open, transparent and strategic dialogue on what needs to be done to allow the United Nations to become more effective. It is now up to members to ensure that the proposals made bear fruit.

Based on lessons learned during the review of the two clusters of mandates — humanitarian assistance and the development of Africa — today the Assembly adopted a resolution on mandate review that lays the ground for a broader debate on the relationship between mandates, resources and measurable outcomes.

On the issue of Security Council reform, despite tremendous difficulties, we managed to reach consensus. I would like to express my deepest gratitude to all Member States for the flexibility they showed throughout the consultations until the very last second. I would like to encourage them, at the next session, to begin preparing for and commencing intergovernmental negotiations in a spirit of common purpose and mutual respect.

How well the Assembly performs depends upon Member States. We can only live up to our mandate if, together, we continually strive to address contemporary issues and emerging trends. That is the best way to bolster the authority and international standing of the Assembly. In that respect, we have made serious, substantive and sustained progress on the five priorities. There were also many positive practical steps taken away from business as usual that I hope will be carried on in future sessions.

Members assumed the mantle of responsibility to become the driving force behind the Assembly. That was evident in the manner in which elections to the Security Council were conducted during the sixty-second session and in the way Kyrgyzstan bravely convinced the membership to adopt a resolution on social justice.

Every Member State deserves equal treatment, and for the first time Israel was able to bring about consensus and contribute its technical expertise so that a resolution on agriculture and development could be adopted. Moreover, whether on civil and political rights, the death penalty or climate change, the Assembly's resolutions demonstrated a more responsive approach attuned to contemporary events.

The General Assembly also seized upon emerging political developments. Members threw their support

behind the Annapolis initiative to better enable the international community to fulfil the long-standing obligation to establish a State of Palestine. Even through difficult, lengthy — but worthwhile — budget negotiations, they put all their differences behind them to insist that the Secretariat demonstrate more efficiency and effectiveness with their taxpayers' contributions. We used panel discussions and thematic debates to shift away from a series of monologues towards interactive dialogue, innovative partnerships and greater outreach. We focused on real and topical issues with greater inclusion. On many occasions during this session, over 100 member States took the floor.

Our work has been characterized by a broad-based, multi-stakeholder approach to contemporary challenges. I have held regular briefings with civil society and non-governmental organizations to keep them involved and to gather their feedback. I visited countries in every regional group to raise the Assembly's profile and connect with issues, views and the United Nations system on the ground. I am extremely grateful for all the kind invitations and hospitality I received, including the very valuable suggestions I heard there from the leaders of the respective countries.

Throughout the session, I regularly met with the President of the Security Council and the President of the Economic and Social Council to ensure a more joint approach to our collective work, particularly on the Peacebuilding Commission. There was more consultation with Member States, and our frequent dialogue with the Secretary-General on topical political issues, such as Myanmar or the food crisis, exemplified our enhanced cooperation. All those strengths indicate that the General Assembly is performing and that it is more responsive and more action-oriented. The concept of a General Assembly revitalization — to revitalize it, to give it new life — is therefore malapropos. The Assembly is certainly alive and kicking, as I can attest. We are living up to the challenges of strengthening the United Nations system. That is the main task of the General Assembly.

Those are just some of the many important examples of success that we achieved by raising issues of real concern in an informal context and reaching out beyond our traditional partners to civil society, parliamentarians, academics and the private sector. When Sir Richard Branson, Ted Turner or Mayor Bloomberg address the General Assembly, whether on climate change or on the Millennium Development Goals, we know we are attracting the right kind of political attention on the issues that matter globally.

We broke new ground on human security, building on the 2005 World Summit. Moreover, we shed light on the deplorable phenomenon of human trafficking and set out a vision on concerted global action based on detailed specifics. The attendance of presidents and prime ministers drew special attention to the global HIV/AIDS pandemic and the rights of the child. Committed celebrities — such as George Clooney, Daryl Hannah, Ashley Judd and Angelina Jolie, to name but a few — also helped to raise the profile of important issues through the additional media exposure they provided.

Moreover, we drew on the universal convening power of the United Nations to strengthen dialogue and promote interreligious and intercultural understanding in cooperation for peace. Interfaith dialogue is a critical instrument for disarming intolerance and preventing conflict. During one of the most memorable highlights of the sixty-second session, His Holiness Pope Benedict XVI endorsed those principles as the very foundation of human well-being when he addressed the Assembly.

I believe that those achievements speak for themselves. It is now for others to judge whether the work of the General Assembly has become more compelling and more relevant. Certainly, I have witnessed a shift, an evolution in our collective mindset, that can serve as the beginning of a move towards a new culture of international relations — a culture that originates in the founding values of this Organization, of freedom, solidarity, equality, respect, tolerance and shared responsibility. In today's uncertain world, those values are ever more relevant to the global public we serve. They find real meaning when they are embodied in the principles of human security, respect for human rights, the responsibility to protect and sustainable development.

As we close this session, I would like to particularly thank Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his commitment to and support for the Assembly, and especially in his leadership on climate change, the MDGs and the overall reform agenda. Over the past 12 months of working together, I have also come to admire his personal qualities and work ethic. During this session, we have also demonstrated that when the

General Assembly provides the strategic political direction and the Secretary-General marshals the full weight of the United Nations system, we can deliver more than the sum of our parts.

I would also like to extend my sincerest appreciation to all the Vice-Presidents of the General Assembly at the sixty-second session, and to thank the chairpersons and the Bureaus of the Main Committees for all their hard work. I would also highlight the dedication and professionalism of all the representatives who have chaired, co-chaired or facilitated important consultation processes.

Allow me to also take this opportunity to express my long-lasting appreciation and sincere thanks to each member of my team. We are a microcosm of the diversity and professionalism of the United Nations.

I would also like to thank the many representatives of civil society and the non-governmental organization community, who are such great advocates for a stronger United Nations and who continually challenge us to do more.

Allow me to also express my appreciation to all the Secretariat staff and the wider United Nations family.

Finally, I would also like to extend a very warm welcome to my successor as President, Mr. Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann.

Before closing, allow me to make three more short remarks. This has been a truly inspiring and momentous year. Going forward, we must not wait for inspiration to make further progress. Action always generates inspiration; inspiration seldom generates action. The issues confronting us are global and require global action. The challenge is whether we have the collective will to work together for the greater good.

If there is a lesson we can take from the sixty-second session, it is that we need more effective multilateralism — more of the United Nations and not less of the United Nations. However, for the United Nations to rise to the challenges ahead, serious, all-encompassing institutional reform is both necessary and overdue. The responsibility rests with Members as to whether or not the United Nations can live up to the high expectations and noble values it was founded upon. This Organization can only be as effective as the Member States wish it to be, for they are the masters of the circumstances I mentioned in the very beginning.

It has been a great honour for me to serve the Assembly throughout this session. I thank all members from the bottom of my heart for their dedication and support this year.

I give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

Mr. Davide (Philippines): I take the floor to remark on a personal and collective privilege. In his acceptance speech upon his election as President of the General Assembly at its sixty-second session on 24 May 2007, Mr. Srgjan Kerim pledged his conscience, his compassion and his capabilities and gave us a glimpse of the outline of his programme of action for the sixty-second session.

At the opening of the sixty-second session of the Assembly on 18 September 2007 he started by saying, "You have asked me to show leadership, and I will do it" (*A/62/PV.1, p. 1*). He continued by giving us the five priority issues that he, in consultation with the membership, had identified for the sixty-second session. He ended by calling for the wholehearted support of Member States in creating the circumstances we need as we chart the course the United Nations must take to build bridges towards a better future.

All of us were witnesses to the sacrifices made by the President. He acted with utmost competence, diligence, patience, dedication and loyalty to the United Nations, and with vision, values and ideals. There can be no doubt at all that, despite all the difficulties, some of which would have been insurmountable, and all the challenges, some of which were daunting, that the sixty-second session faced, especially in the last few hours of the session, reflected in today's meeting of the Open-Ended Working Group on Security Council Reform, President Kerim, with his pledged conscience, compassion and capabilities, succeeded in steering the work of the sixty-second session to its successful conclusion. He gave his all and worked with a passion for excellence. He has left a legacy that the history of the United Nations will record in gold. He deserves our unanimous congratulations as today he ends his brief tenure of one session of the General Assembly.

Truly, the President can now say with confidence, as Paul wrote to Timothy of the New Testament: "I have competed well; I have finished the race; I have kept the faith. From now on the crown of righteousness awaits me" (*The Holy Bible, 2 Timothy 4: 7-8*).

Congratulations once again, and thank you for everything, Mr. President. You deserve a standing ovation from all of us.

Agenda item 2 (*continued*)

Minute of silent prayer or meditation

The President: May I invite representatives to stand and observe one minute of silent prayer or meditation.

The members of the General Assembly observed a minute of silent prayer or meditation.

Closure of the sixty-second session

The President: Before proceeding further, I would like to invite to the podium the President-elect for the sixty-third session of the General Assembly, His Excellency Miguel d'Escoto Brockmann, so that I may hand over the gavel to him.

I declare closed the sixty-second session of the General Assembly.

The meeting rose at 7.55 p.m.